

Ron Dunlap is legislators' fourth appointee to congressional redistricting panel

by Lyle Burt

Times Olympia Bureau

Ron Dunlap, former King County executive, today was named by the Senate Republican leaders to the fourth position on the newly established congressional redistricting commission.

The commission itself must now pick a fifth and final member, then quickly fix the problems that caused federal judges to nullify the state's present congressional district map.

In addition to Dunlap, other members of the commission are:

— Don Eldridge, a one-time Republican House speaker from Olympia, named to the commission by House Republicans;

— Pete Francis, former Democratic state senator from Seattle, named by Senate Democrats; and

— James Gillespie, a former United States Attorney now in private practice in Spokane, named by House Democrats.

Dunlap, an unsuccessful congressional candidate in 1980, was actually the Republicans second choice for the redistricting panel.

Senate Minority Leader Jeanette Hayner said he was chosen after the original appointee, Glen Pascall, decided against accepting the job.

She said Pascall, former state revenue director now working as a consultant, originally accepted the appointment but then changed his mind because of a possible conflict of interest.

Hayner said she understood Pascall has a client for whom he might do some lobbying before the Legislature.

Pascall was appointed revenue director by Gov. John Spellman, and subsequently fired by the governor for suggesting to a legislative committee that a state income tax may be under consideration.

The fifth commission member will serve as a non-voting chairman.

Dunlap served six years in the House of Representatives, from 1974 through 1980. In 1980 he ran unsuccessfully for Congress in the 7th District against the Democrat incumbent, Mike Lowry.

Early next year he was appointed King County executive but lost that

position later in 1981 when he was defeated by Randy Revelle. Dunlap now is president of a Bellevue investment firm.

The temporary commission was created by the Legislature and approved by Spellman after a three judge federal court panel threw out a 1982 congressional redistricting law on constitutional grounds. The court said population varies too greatly from district to district under the present plan.

The court gave the lawmakers 90 days after convening January 10 to come up with an acceptable plan, or the court will take over the matter.

Instead of undertaking the task themselves, the legislators decided to hand over the job to a commission,

but retain a veto power whatever plan the commission comes up with.

After the plan is completed, the Legislature has 15 days to consider it. If no action is taken, the plan will go into effect. But the Legislature can change it with a two-thirds majority in both Houses.

Legislation to establish a permanent commission, which would redistrict the state for both legislative and congressional purposes every 10 years, still awaits final action.